



Texas Cattle Tuberculosis Identification Regulations

What is Cattle Tuberculosis?

Cattle tuberculosis is a chronic debilitating disease of cattle caused by the bacterium *Mycobacterium bovis* (*M. Bovis*). Human tuberculosis is caused by a closely related type of bacteria and was historically known as “consumption”. A variety of other species may be susceptible to cattle tuberculosis, including elk and deer, bison, goats, swine, cats and man. Sheep and horses are rarely affected.

Cattle tuberculosis is primarily a respiratory disease affecting the lungs and chest lymph nodes. Symptoms can include progressive weight loss, chronic cough, and unexplained death loss.

Tuberculosis (TB) has a long incubation period (months to years) and was once the most prevalent infectious disease of cattle and swine in the U.S. Bovine TB caused more losses among U.S. farm animals in the early part of this century than all other infectious diseases combined.

In 2000, Texas won the battle against cattle TB, earning the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) TB accredited-free status. In 2002, status was revoked when two infected cattle herds were detected.

By October 2006, Texas regained TB-free status, but only after extensive testing to identify any infection. This included testing 2,014 purebred beef operations and all 818 of the state’s dairies. Slaughter surveillance was also greatly enhanced.

Cattle TB is detected most often through inspection at the slaughter plant. Internal lesions that are detected are collected and forwarded for laboratory confirmation. Live animal testing of herd mates follows and test-positive animals are further investigated for evidence of disease.

Like many other bacterial diseases, cattle TB transmission occurs more easily when animals are concentrated in close confinement. Infected animals normally spread the TB bacteria to their herd mates by expelling infected droplets from their lungs, but ingestion of the bacteria is also possible.

The Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) is working to maintain Texas “free” status and has implemented several regulation changes to aid in tracing exposed or diseased animals. The changes include identification (ID), enhancing the testing of dairy cattle entering Texas and TB testing for Mexican-origin exhibition animals moved from other states.

Cattle TB Regulation:

- Texas dairy cattle, regardless of age or sex, must be identified prior to movement within Texas.

Months of work can be expended tracing the movement of cattle infected or exposed to TB. This rule will assist epidemiologists in identifying the source and possible spread of diseased or exposed animals.

What types of ID are acceptable?

- USDA alphanumeric tests tags (USDA silver tags)
- USDA alphanumeric brucellosis calfhood vaccination tags (USDA orange tags)
- Dairy Herd Improvement Association (DHIA) tags
- Official breed registry tattoos or firebrand
- USDA approved Animal Identification Number (AIN) tags for official identification of individual animals. Three forms of official AIN tags are available:
 - Manufacturer coded “900” series RFID tags, available from many feed or supply stores
 - USA prefix RFID tags
 - Country code “840” series RFID tags. Producers who use the “840” series must have their premises registered
- A commercially produced cattle-style clip, flap or button tag that identifies the dairy or owner and includes a unique animal number in the herd.
- The TAHC also is considering approval for other types of identification.

Dairy cattle need to be identified when they leave their herd of origin. Tags are NOT to be removed by subsequent owners.

Why tag dairy cattle?

Dairy animals, managed in close confinement are at a greater risk for disease exposure if an infected animal is in the herd. All dairy cattle **MUST** be tagged regardless of age or sex.

I’m a beef producer with one dairy cow, do I need to tag her?

Yes, she needs to be tagged before transporting to market or slaughter.

Who's responsible for identifying dairy cattle before movement?

The owner or manager of the animals is responsible for ensuring that dairy animals are identified before movement.

Is there additional record keeping?

The owner should keep records of the animals identified.

Where can I get tags?

Contact your local TAHC office or private veterinarian for more information.



**Cattle TB Regulations,
effective, October 13, 2007:**

- All dairy cattle coming into Texas must be identified prior to entry.
- Sexually intact dairy cattle, older than two months, must have been tested for TB within 60 days prior to entering the state or originate from an accredited free herd and be accompanied by a certificate of veterinary inspection.

- Sexually intact dairy cattle, younger than two months, must have an entry permit and a certificate of veterinary inspection and go to a premises where they will be held until tested negative for TB at the age of two months.

Cattle TB exposure can occur at a very early age. To protect against the introduction of the disease, the test eligible age for imported sexually intact dairy cattle has been lowered from six months to two months of age.

- A TB test is NOT required for out-of-state dairy cattle moving directly to slaughter but must have official ID and be accompanied by a certificate of veterinary inspection or delivered to an approved feedlot in Texas for finish feeding for **slaughter only**.

Dairy animals moving to an approved feedlot must be identified and have a TAHC entry permit in addition to a certificate of veterinary inspection.

- Mexican-origin ("M" branded) steers recognized as potential exhibition and/or roping stock, and entering Texas from other states must have had a negative TB within the previous 12 months.

These steers must be accompanied by an entry permit and a certificate of veterinary inspection issued within the previous 30 days.

(Regulations already were in place that required Mexican-origin exhibition animals imported directly to Texas from Mexico to be TB tested prior to use and tested annually thereafter.)

Information provided by the:

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